Research Article
Received: 31.07.2025
Accepted: 25.11.2025
Published: 30.11.2025

Journal of Disaster and Risk
8(3), 2025, (1247-1259)
e-ISSN: 2636-8390
DOI: 10.35341/afet.1755281

The Role of Communication in Disaster Management Strategic Plans: The Examples of TARAP, TAMP and TASİP

Mehtap Aras[1], Çiğdem Tetik Biçer[2]

Abstract

Disasters cause physical destruction and disrupt the psychological, economic, and social dynamics of societies. Effective disaster management requires more than technical and logistical preparation; it demands robust communication strategies integrated into every phase of the disaster cycle. Türkiye has made significant progress in institutionalising disaster management through national plans such as the Türkiye Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP), Türkiye Disaster Response Plan (TAMP), and Türkiye Post-Disaster Recovery Plan (TASİP), developed under the coordination of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). However, the communication dimension within these frameworks remains a developing area that warrants systematic analysis and enhancement. This study examines the role and strategic significance of communication in disaster management by analysing these plans in light of crisis communication literature and international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The analysis highlights several noteworthy developments: TARAP prioritises public awareness and risk communication; TAMP assigns communication responsibilities during emergencies to a centralised Press and Public Relations Group; and TASİP institutionalises a Communication and Information Unit responsible for delivering timely, reliable information to the public and media during recovery. The study concludes that communication is not a supplementary function but a core element of governance in disaster management. To enhance Türkiye's disaster communication capacity, these plans should be reinforced through implementation tools emphasising inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness, including context-sensitive communication protocols, training for field personnel, digital platforms with misinformation management capabilities, and the empowerment of community-based actors such as local leaders and civil society organisations.

Keywords: Crisis Communication, Disaster Management, TAMP, TARAP, TASİP

1. INTRODUCTION

Disasters cause loss of life and property, disrupt the social, cultural, economic, and psychological balance of societies, and can overwhelm the coping capacity of affected communities. To prevent or minimize these losses, disaster management systems capable of anticipating, reducing, and managing disaster impacts must be established and maintained.

With the establishment of AFAD in Türkiye and the adoption of an integrated disaster management system, a comprehensive management process has been initiated to minimise the potential impacts and losses of disasters. Integrated disaster management is a process that begins before a disaster occurs and continues throughout the event, as well as its aftermath. It

[1] Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of Emergency Aid and Disaster Management, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Turkey
Corresponding author e-mail: mehtap.aras@gop.edu.tr , ORCID: 0000-0003-1194-8123
[2] Dr., Ministry of Interior, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: cigdem.tetik@afad.gov.tr , ORCID: 0000-0001-6303-4337

To cite this article
Aras, M., Tetik Biçer, Ç. (2025). The Role of Communication In Disaster Management Strategic Plans: The Examples of TARAP, TAMP and TASİP. J*ournal of Disaster and Risk, 8*(3), 1247-1259.

encompasses a broad perspective and a management cycle that includes all necessary processes before, during, and after a disaster. In this sense, integrated disaster management is commonly described as comprising four phases: preparedness, risk identification and mitigation, response, and recovery (Diedrichs et al., 2016). Developed to minimise disaster impacts and increase societal resilience, integrated disaster management, as a multidisciplinary field of study, necessitates close collaboration between natural and social sciences, which work together and/or from different perspectives on similar problems.

Disaster management is also an inherently managerial field. Management – or the activity of managing – encompasses numerous functions that significantly influence overall performance. Communication is the driving force behind effectiveness and success in all managerial functions. Management science is an interdisciplinary field that examines the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of the resources necessary for organizations to achieve their goals. In this context, communication plays a central role in both the theoretical foundations and the practical management processes. The classical definition of management as "getting things done through others" positions communication not merely as a means of conveying information but as an enabler of coordinated organisational action. All management activities – planning, organising, executing, coordinating, and controlling – operate through communication processes (Miller, 2015).

Because disaster management is characterised by high uncertainty and multi-actor structures, communication assumes even more critical and strategic importance. Disaster management is not limited to planning and resource allocation; it also represents a comprehensive process that requires the rapid, accurate, and reliable exchange of information among stakeholders (Saputro, 2016; Friedman et al., 2011). Accordingly, communication is not merely a process of information transfer; it has multifaceted functions such as ensuring inter-institutional coordination, informing the public, directing resources effectively, and building public trust (Malesic, 2019).

The integrated disaster management process is not limited to technical intervention and resource allocation; it is a multi-actor, complex, and multi-layered administrative process. Communication is a fundamental element for the success of this process at all stages. Information uncertainties, coordination problems among stakeholders, and public distrust experienced during crises often stem from communication deficiencies (Coombs, 2023; Malesic, 2019). Effective communication enables not only the transfer of information but also the support of decision-making processes, the effective management of resources, the provision of accurate and timely information to the public, and the facilitation of psychosocial recovery (Liu, Iles, and Herovic, 2020; Cadwell, 2020). Raising public awareness about risks before a disaster, coordinating operations during a disaster, and re-informing the public after a disaster are only possible with a planned and multifaceted communication strategy. Therefore, communication is a constituent component of disaster management, not a complementary one.

In this context, communication is addressed in detail as an indispensable element of integrated management in the three main strategic plans developed by AFAD in Türkiye, namely TARAP (AFAD, 2022a), TAMP (AFAD, 2014; 2022b), and TASİP (AFAD, 2025). At the global level, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 positions communication as a core enabling factor for understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, and enhancing preparedness and recovery capacities. Situating TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP within this internationally recognised framework allows us to assess Türkiye's disaster communication architecture against globally accepted DRR governance principles (UNDRR, 2015).

Accordingly, the article is guided by three interrelated research questions that organise both the conceptual discussion and the document analysis. **The first research question concerns** how

TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP define and institutionalise communication across the pre-disaster, response, and recovery phases of the disaster cycle. Addressing this question enables a systematic mapping of the explicit positioning of communication in each plan, the identification of the institutions responsible for it, and an assessment of how these responsibilities are distributed over time and across governance levels.

The second research question explores the extent to which these national plans reflect key principles from crisis communication scholarship and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, particularly with regard to transparency, trust-building, participation, and feedback mechanisms. Here, the aim is not to "test" the plans against an abstract ideal model, but to understand how far Türkiye's strategic documents incorporate widely accepted norms of effective risk and crisis communication, and where important dimensions such as accountability or two-way communication remain underdeveloped.

The third research question examines what strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement emerge in Türkiye's national disaster communication architecture when TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP are compared with benchmark UN and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) disaster communication models (IFRC, 2016). This comparative question translates the previous two into a more practice-oriented assessment, highlighting which elements of Türkiye's approach are already aligned with international guidance and which aspects – such as coordination across plans, the use of diverse communication channels, or the explicit targeting of vulnerable groups – require further refinement.

Taken together, these three questions provide a clear logical pathway from the content of the plans, through the conceptual lens adopted in the article, to concrete implications for improving disaster communication governance in Türkiye.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHOD

Building on the introduction, this section clarifies how communication is conceptualised across the main phases of the disaster cycle. In line with the integrated disaster management perspective adopted in this article, pre-disaster activities are treated under disaster risk reduction and preparedness, the disaster phase under crisis management, and the post-disaster phase under recovery and reconstruction. The focus here is on how communication functions are linked to these phases in national strategic plans.

Disaster management encompasses pre-disaster preparation, risk identification, and mitigation activities. Disaster risk reduction refers to efforts to identify and assess the risk of loss of life and property, and to protect people, infrastructure, and economic and social resources from the impacts of disasters. It requires a multifaceted approach that involves the participation of various stakeholders and segments of society, including individuals, communities, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector (Rafi et al., 2018: 973). In this pre-disaster context, communication primarily takes the form of risk communication and awareness-raising, aiming to convey scientific and technical information about hazards and vulnerabilities to different audiences in a clear and actionable manner.

All management activities carried out from the moment a disaster occurs are considered within the scope of crisis management, and the strategies implemented during this process directly affect its success. Because disaster management has a multi-actor structure, establishing effective communication with all stakeholders during a crisis is both critical and challenging. While communication plays a fundamental role in every aspect of management, its importance becomes

particularly evident in administrative decision-making and coordination processes during a disaster. During the disaster phase, the capacity and resilience of communication systems, as well as the way they operate and the strategies employed, differ significantly from those in other periods and become more complex.

In crisis management processes during disasters, communication serves as a strategic tool for information transfer, building trust, resolving uncertainties, and informing decision-making. The literature highlights several fundamental principles of crisis communication, including openness, accuracy, honesty, a two-way flow of information, and relevance to the goal (Coombs, 2023; Haupt, 2021; Liu, Iles, and Herovic, 2020). This necessitates conducting crisis communication with simple, understandable, and goal-oriented messages. During a crisis, it is essential to inform the public, address their concerns, and establish an environment of mutual trust (Haupt, 2021). However, the need for information increases dramatically during disasters, while individuals under intense emotional stress can reduce their information processing capacity by up to 80% (Coombs, 2023: 156). This presents a significant obstacle to successful process management and underscores the need for carefully designed, repeated, and accessible communication.

Internal and external stakeholders affected by all actions taken during a disaster must be informed, and an uninterrupted flow of information must be ensured (Coombs, 2023: 155). Communication during a disaster is not only the responsibility of public institutions; it operates within a multi-actor network structure that includes local governments, NGOs, the media, and individuals (Jayasekara, 2019; Cadwell, 2020). In Türkiye, within the scope of TAMP, the "press and public relations working group" is responsible for ensuring the accurate and consistent dissemination of information during a disaster. In TARAP and TASİP, communication is framed as an integral part of post-crisis recovery and trust-restoration processes rather than as a purely operational support function. Within this framework, the primary functions of communication processes during a disaster are to provide information and coordination, foster trust, and support informed decision-making. Otherwise, disinformation, panic, public distrust, and operational failures become likely outcomes. Communication thus serves not only as a channel for information but also as a guidance tool and a factor that contributes to psychological stability and trust-building.

Recent Turkish scholarship also highlights the ambivalent role of the media as both an information provider and a potential source of chaos in disaster contexts. A bibliometric analysis by Öztürk and Demir (2023) reveals that disaster communication and media studies in Türkiye are increasingly focusing on themes such as framing, disinformation, and public trust, which directly align with the strategic communication dimensions discussed in this article.

Following a disaster, communication becomes a vital tool for managing the recovery process, rebuilding public confidence, and facilitating social recovery. Uncertainties, disinformation, and emotional trauma experienced during a crisis further increase the public's need for accurate information in the post-disaster period. The primary objectives of communication activities during this period are to transparently inform the public about the process and to establish trust by publicising aid provided, damage assessment efforts, reconstruction plans, and psychosocial support mechanisms (Cadwell, 2020; Haupt, 2021). Specifically, within the scope of TASİP, post-disaster communication in Türkiye is conducted through "Communication and Information Units" established at national and local levels. These units ensure a healthy flow of information between disaster victims, public institutions, the media, NGOs, and international support organisations. Providing timely, clear, and consistent information about post-disaster activities—such as housing allocation, infrastructure repair, aid distribution, and social support processes—prevents public speculation, rumors, and disinformation (Malesic, 2019). At the same time, one of the most potent tools for rebuilding the relationship between the state and the public, which may have been

shaken during the crisis, is the establishment of effective communication bridges in this period. Digital communication, particularly through social media, provides new avenues of interaction following a disaster, both for gathering feedback and for recognising and addressing the emotional needs of disaster victims (Jayasekara, 2019). In short, post-disaster communication is not only a technical and operational necessity but also the psychological, sociological, and administrative foundation of social recovery.

2.1. Research Design and Method

This study employs a qualitative document analysis and comparative policy analysis design. The primary empirical material consists of three national strategic plans prepared under the coordination of AFAD—TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP—complemented by a small set of benchmark international documents, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and selected UN and IFRC disaster communication guidelines. No survey or interview data are used; instead, the analysis relies entirely on a systematic reading and comparison of documentary sources (IFRC, 2016).

First, all provisions, actions, and sub-sections explicitly referring to "communication", "information", "public relations", "media", "awareness-raising", and "participation" were systematically identified and extracted from the three national plans. These extracts were then organised along the three main phases of the disaster cycle: pre-disaster (risk reduction and preparedness), disaster (response and crisis management), and post-disaster (recovery and reconstruction). This step clarifies where communication is explicitly placed within each plan and which institutions are mandated to take responsibility in each phase.

Second, the extracted statements were coded under analytical categories derived from the crisis communication literature and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. These categories included, among others, risk communication, crisis communication, recovery communication, target groups (e.g., general public, vulnerable groups, media, local actors), communication channels and tools (e.g., mass media, social media, early warning systems), institutional responsibilities, feedback, and accountability mechanisms. In this way, the conceptual discussions in Section 2 are translated into concrete analytical lenses that guide the reading of each plan.

Third, TARAP's communication-related provisions were compared with the corresponding elements in UN and IFRC guidance documents. This comparative step provided the basis for constructing Tables 1 and 2, which summarise both the overlapping and divergent features between Türkiye's national disaster communication strategy and international models. The comparison criteria used in these tables—such as independence and impartiality, communication infrastructure, early warning, crisis communication, and coordination mechanisms—were directly operationalised from the coded categories and the content of the benchmark documents. Finally, the communication components of TAMP and TASİP were interpreted in light of these analytical categories and comparative insights. Rather than producing numerical scores, the analysis focuses on identifying patterns, emphases, and blind spots in how communication is problematised and operationalised across the three national plans. This includes, for example, noting which target groups are explicitly addressed, which communication channels are prioritised, and how feedback and participation are (or are not) incorporated. In this way, the methodological approach links the conceptual framework on crisis communication with a structured, transparent reading of Türkiye's strategic disaster management documents, generating evidence-based implications for improving national disaster communication governance.

3. COMMUNICATION IN TÜRKİYE DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY PLANS

The importance of communication in disaster management policies implemented by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), particularly in the Sendai Framework Document on Disaster Risk Reduction – SFDRR (2015-2023), is highlighted under the following headings:

- **Public Awareness and Information:** Communication is crucial for raising public awareness of disaster risks and raising awareness levels. Organizing educational campaigns on disaster awareness, disseminating it through media and social media, and ensuring its visibility is a comprehensive communication policy.

- **Coordination among Stakeholders:** Disaster communication is also needed to strengthen disaster management/governance by establishing a strong communication network among public institutions, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector. Coordination and cooperation between institutions and units in disasters are only possible with a sound disaster communication policy.

- **Preventing Misinformation**: Providing information through reliable news sources and official institutions is essential to preventing the spread of misinformation during a disaster. Combating disinformation is a necessary parameter for effective resource utilization in disaster management. Otherwise, misinformation can lead to misdirection or misuse of available resources.

- **Post-Disaster Communication and Recovery Processes:** Disaster communication facilitates informational efforts for disaster victims and coordinates post-disaster support programs. After a disaster, people need reliable information sources to minimize the negative impacts of the disaster and accelerate the process of returning to their everyday lives.

SFDRR presents an international roadmap for reducing disaster risks globally and increasing the resilience of societies. It **emphasizes** the need to understand disaster risks in the pre-disaster period and **states** that raising awareness and educating communities about disaster risks is essential. The document also explained the importance of developing multi-hazard early warning systems before a disaster and effectively sharing these systems with the public, emphasizing that pre-disaster preparedness can be achieved through communication measures against potential disasters.

In SFDRR, it emphasized the importance of accurate and timely information flow for emergency communication during disasters. This is essential for ensuring public safety and preventing panic. Furthermore, effective coordination and collaboration during disasters also ensure effective communication and harmonious and efficient response efforts among different institutions and stakeholders. The document addresses explicitly post-disaster communication, with a focus on managing the recovery process. Informing and involving the public is crucial in post-disaster reconstruction and recovery processes. This supports the adoption of the "Build Back Better" approach. It also encourages sharing experiences from each disaster through post-disaster communication channels and exchanging information to prevent similar situations in the future.

The SFDRR emphasizes the central role of communication in disaster risk management and recommends the active participation of all stakeholders in this process. AFAD is the institution responsible for disaster management in Türkiye and coordinates disaster communication. The integrated disaster management system implemented by AFAD is designed as a multi-stakeholder, communication-first system. Türkiye' integrated disaster management system

framework also incorporates strategies from international policy documents, including the SFDRR and its predecessor, the Hyogo Framework Document (2005-2015) (UNISDR, 2005). To ensure the sustainability of this system, strategic planning has been implemented for disaster management. TARAP was developed as Türkiye's national disaster risk reduction plan for the pre-disaster phase, TAMP for disaster response, and TASİP for the post-disaster recovery phase (AFAD, 2022a;2022b;2025).

3.1.The Role and Importance of Communication in TAMP

TAMP is a national plan to respond to disasters and emergencies adequately. The first version was published in the Official Gazette on January 3, 2014, and took effect. It defined the roles and responsibilities of institutions and organizations involved in disaster response efforts. In 2022, TAMP was updated and entered into force upon publication in the Official Gazette on September 15, 2022. The primary reason for this update was the changes in ministries and affiliated organizations brought into effect by the Presidential Decrees enacted in 2018. This update was designed to align the plan with the current administrative structure and meet current needs in disaster management. Both versions defined the roles and responsibilities of working groups and coordination units involved in disaster and emergency response efforts, while the first version focused on disaster communication and coordination. The primary duties of this service group are as follows (TAMP V1):

- Strengthening critical communication infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of communication systems used during disasters and uninterrupted communication.
- Coordination among official institutions to ensure information sharing among public institutions, local governments, and NGOs during disasters.
- Media and public relations management must disseminate accurate and reliable information through the media and prevent the spread of misinformation.
- Utilizing emergency communication systems to operate satellite phones, radio, and digital communication networks effectively.
- Combating disinformation to identify misinformation and ensure the public receives information from reliable sources.

Under the coordination of AFAD, this service group collaborated with the Ministry of Interior, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK), the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) operators, and other relevant stakeholders. Infrastructure strengthening work was carried out to ensure the uninterrupted operation of communication systems, crisis communication strategies were implemented, and accurate information was conveyed to the public through the media. In line with both lessons learned from past disasters and needs, the TAMP (2022) update has established critical groups, including the "Disaster Communication Working Group," the "Social Support Working Group, the Coordination and Support Working Group, the Information Management Working Group, and the Disaster Risk Management Working Group." The Disaster Communication Working Group's leading solution partner is the Presidential Directorate of Communications (CIB), and its core duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- Developing Disaster Communication Strategies: Develops communication strategies to ensure accurate and rapid public information in disasters and emergencies.
- Media Coordination: Works with media organizations during disasters to ensure accurate information is conveyed to the public.
- Crisis Communication Management: Implement effective communication methods to prevent disinformation and public panic in crises.
- Social Media Management: Monitors information spread on social media platforms, corrects misinformation, and disseminates accurate information.
- Public Service Announcements and Information Campaigns: Organizes public service announcements and information campaigns to raise public awareness before, during, and after disasters.

These tasks aim to ensure the accuracy of public information during disasters, prevent the spread of disinformation, and raise public awareness. An examination of international examples similar to the Disaster Communication Working Group reveals that these groups aim to ensure uninterrupted and effective communication during disasters and emergencies. For example, the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a Public Information Task Force to manage communication strategies during disasters and emergencies (FEMA, 2020). This unit is responsible for ensuring the accurate and rapid flow of information during disasters, informing the public, and coordinating with the media. Similarly, communication strategies have been developed and implemented in Japan within the context of disaster management. Such institutional structures are critical for ensuring the continuity of information flow and accurate public information during disasters. The European Union (EU) has an Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC), which coordinates communication and information sharing in disaster situations within the scope of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The ERCC facilitates the flow of information among member states and informs the public during disasters (EU,2023).

3.2. The Role and Importance of Communication in TARAP

TARAP is the first national risk reduction plan, published in the Official Gazette on July 8, 2022, and put into force as a legally binding framework (AFAD, 2022a). TARAP outlines the necessary actions to reduce national disaster risks for many disasters and addresses five distinct aspects of disaster communication.

a) Increasing Public Awareness of Disaster Risks: Disaster communication is considered one of the most fundamental tools for increasing social resilience. Raising awareness, particularly in print and visual media, about broadcasting ethics in disaster management is a crucial part of this effort. To this end, AFAD collaborates with stakeholders, including the Presidential Directorate of Communications, Anadolu Agency, and TRT.

b) Communication Targeted to Special Groups: TARAP specifically targets individuals with special needs to raise awareness of disaster risks and emphasizes the development of effective communication methods with these groups.

c) Language Unity and Coordination: The aim is to standardize the language used in disaster management and thus prevent misunderstandings in communication through practices such as updating the Annotated Disaster Management Glossary (AFAD, 2022c).

d) Media Collaboration: The media's approach to broadcasting during disasters and sharing accurate and reliable information is crucial within TARAP. This is considered crucial to avoid misleading the public and creating panic.

e) Public Participation and Education: Communication-based actions such as disseminating disaster awareness training and organizing informational campaigns through media and digital platforms are at the forefront.

TARAP does not limit disaster communication to providing information flow during crises; it also requires a continuous and multidimensional communication strategy for pre-disaster preparedness, disaster coordination, and post-disaster recovery. This strategy largely aligns with international approaches. TARAP presents a plan for disaster communication that aligns with the SFDRR and prioritizes public awareness. However, compared to international systems, it is more centralized and public-focused. On the other hand, institutions like the UN and IFRC offer more independent, multi-stakeholder, and flexible communication models that can adapt to various crisis environments. Table 1 compares the main disaster communication strategies of TARAP with those of the UN and IFRC, while Table 2 highlights key structural differences between these models.

Table 1. Comparison of TARAP and UN/IFRC Disaster Communication Strategies

Main Area	TARAP (Türkiye)	BM / IFRC (International)
Public Awareness	Education and media campaigns to raise public awareness before, during, and after disasters.	Risk communication and community-based awareness campaigns.
Collaboration with the Media	Coordinate with visual/print media and be aware of publishing ethics.	Active collaboration with the media and the media guided by ethical publishing principles.
Inclusion	Specialized communication methods for groups with special needs.	Providing information in local languages and formats appropriate for vulnerable groups.
Standard Language	Ensuring uniformity in communication with the annotated glossary of disaster terms.	Universal communication standards, such as the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP).
Local Participation	Involving the public in local-level planning through Provincial Risk Reduction Plans (İRAP)	Community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) and local volunteer networks.

**The table was created by the author/authors.*

Table 2. Key differences in communication strategies between TARAP and UN/IFRC

Differences in Communication Strategies between TARAP and the UN		
Main Area	**TARAP**	**BM / IFRC (International)**
Independence and Impartiality	A centralized communication model under the coordination of a state institution (AFAD).	Impartial, independent humanitarian actors (especially the IFRC) avoid political influences in information sharing.
Communications Infrastructure	A system structured through AFAD and the Presidential Directorate of Communications.	International satellite-based systems, mobile information points, and radio centers.
Early Warning	The goal is to develop a National Early Warning System (currently under development).	Multi-hazard early warning systems are being implemented on a global scale.
Crisis Communication	Information provided through official state-controlled media.	Direct communication with the public during a crisis, working with community leaders and local radio stations.

**The table was created by the authors.*

3.3.The Role and Importance of Communication in TASİP

The post-disaster recovery process is not limited to repairing physical damage; it is also a multidimensional management process that includes accurately informing the public, ensuring active participation, and rebuilding public trust. Therefore, communication activities carried out in the post-disaster period are strategically important. TASİP, prepared in Türkiye for this purpose, aims to ensure that post-disaster activities are planned, transparent, and coordinated (AFAD, 2025).

According to the TASİP document, regularly informing the public about the process in the post-disaster period strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of the process. In this framework, Communication and Information Units, envisioned to be established at national and local levels, are responsible for ensuring the flow of information to the public, collecting feedback, and managing relations with the media. At the national level, this function is carried out by the

Communication and Information Unit within the TASİP Coordination Board. In contrast, a similar structure is being established locally under the Provincial TASİP Boards.

Key communication objectives identified within the plan include transparently sharing decisions regarding the recovery process with the public, making ongoing work visible, preventing disinformation and misperceptions, and establishing direct and open communication with disaster victims. To this end, TASİP adopts a centralized communication approach and a multi-level and participatory model, envisioning the inclusion of stakeholders such as local governments, civil society organizations, and community representatives. Thus, post-disaster communication becomes not merely an operational process but also a fundamental governance tool for the sustainability of the recovery process and the restoration of public trust.

Disaster communication is addressed in detail in the TASİP document, particularly under the heading "Communication and Information Unit." The draft document, currently in the approval phase, emphasizes the importance of establishing regular and reliable communication with the public and states that post-disaster developments should be communicated transparently to the public via television, radio, social media, and digital channels. Furthermore, timely information sharing on critical issues such as cash assistance, commercial support, temporary shelter, education, and housing planning is among the plan's priorities. Disaster communication is defined here not merely as an information tool but as a strategic element that enables the rebuilding of social trust. In this process, the Presidential Directorate of Communications, AFAD, and relevant ministries are key implementers and supporters of the communication strategy. TASİP moves disaster communication beyond a technical detail and considers it a fundamental structure that balances the political, social, and psychological dimensions of the recovery process.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Türkiye has developed a system consistent with international disaster management principles by adopting an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach to disaster management. Within this framework, communication is crucial in all stages of risk reduction, response, and recovery. Information and education activities conducted before a disaster prepare society, while effective communication strategies during and after a disaster strengthen crisis management and play a crucial role in combating disinformation.

While Türkiye's current communication strategies have strengths compared to global practices, there is still room for improvement. The sustainability of the communication infrastructure, particularly during and after a disaster, is paramount. When GSM lines are out of service, alternative communication systems (e.g., satellite phones, wireless systems, mobile base stations) should be expanded. Expanding automated warning mechanisms, such as SMS notification systems, mobile applications, and siren warning systems, will facilitate responses by providing instant public information. In the pre-disaster period, it is crucial to regularly share content to raise risk awareness through social media and digital platforms, and to use official social media accounts as reliable information sources effectively. In this context, instant data sharing, maps, and verified information should be openly made available to the public, and institutional verification mechanisms should be implemented to combat disinformation. Seminars on crisis communication and disaster awareness should be organized to raise public awareness of disasters, and volunteer information teams should be established at the neighborhood level to provide support and assistance. Local leaders should be trained in disaster communication to strengthen community-based communication networks. Furthermore, examining international best practices, developing collaborative networks, and aligning with global standards in disaster communication should also be priorities.

Communication is not only a tool for conveying information in the disaster management process; it is also a fundamental management element that directly impacts the feasibility of strategic decisions, community participation in the process, and the effectiveness of response. Therefore, strengthening communication infrastructures appropriate to disaster scenarios and institutionalizing communication plans based on scientific foundations is crucial. At all stages of integrated disaster management, communication should be structured and implemented both vertically (from institutions to the public) and horizontally (between institutions and within society). Vertical communication should be based on a two-way flow of information, ensuring that feedback from the field, local communities, and direct disaster victims is integrated into decision-making processes. In this context, the role of the media is strategic. Press members should be trained in crisis communication and ensure that they act with ethical and responsible publishing practices during disasters. To prevent disinformation, a central communication coordination point should be established among public institutions, and safe spaces should be established for the press in disaster areas, facilitating access to accurate information. Communication is not only a tool for conveying information during the disaster cycle; it is also a critical factor in building trust within disaster-affected communities, countering rumors, and facilitating access to accurate information. These findings are also in line with recent Turkish media and disaster management research, which documents how communication failures can quickly produce information chaos in crisis settings (Öztürk and Demir, 2023).

The lessons from the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes make these recommendations particularly concrete. During this multi-provincial disaster, intermittent failures in communication infrastructure, fragmented messaging by various institutions, and the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media highlighted the limitations of existing protocols. At the same time, neighbourhood-level solidarity networks, local leaders, and civil society organisations emerged as de facto information hubs in many affected settlements. Embedding these lessons into TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP—by clarifying a single authoritative voice, pre-designing social media monitoring and verification cells, and formally recognising community intermediaries within communication chains—would increase both the feasibility and the legitimacy of national disaster communication strategies in future large-scale events. In other words, the February 2023 earthquakes provide a real-life “stress test” that confirms communication is not a supplementary function but a core component of disaster governance in Türkiye.

National strategic plans such as TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP, implemented under the coordination of AFAD in Türkiye, provide a strong framework for institutionalizing disaster communication. TARAP addresses pre-disaster risk communication and awareness-raising efforts; TAMP addresses crisis communication during disasters; and TASİP delivers a systematic structure for informing the public after a disaster. However, the practical application of these documents in the field is possible only if they are regularly updated, adapted to technological developments, and disseminated locally.

When Türkiye's disaster management strategic plans are evaluated in terms of communication, the following recommendations can be made for improvement:

- Communication components should be defined in more detail in strategic plans. Crisis communication protocols, messaging processes, and feedback mechanisms should be clearly outlined, particularly in plans such as TAMP and TASİP.
- Communication personnel should be supported with regular training and drills. The communication skills of crisis teams should be strengthened, particularly in delivering effective messages under stress, media management, and responding to social media crises.
- Local communication networks should be established, and the active participation of local stakeholders should be ensured. Mukhtars (neighborhood headmen), local NGOs, and community leaders represent critical links in the disaster communication chain.

- Verification systems should be established for communication conducted via social media. A fast, precise, and reliable flow of information should be ensured from official accounts, and fact-checking mechanisms should be implemented to combat misinformation.
- Crisis communication should be designed as a two-way process, and feedback systems should be strengthened. Information from disaster victims, field personnel, and citizens should be integrated into decision-making processes. Communication in disaster management is not just a complementary tool but a strategic imperative. Without developing effective, transparent, and reliable communication models, the success of response processes and the sustainability of post-disaster recovery cannot be ensured. Documents such as TARAP, TAMP, and TASİP are not merely strategic guidelines; they are living systems implemented in the disaster field, embraced by stakeholders, and requiring continuous improvement.

REFERENCES

AFAD (2014). Türkiye Afet Müdahale Planı (TAMP). 3 Ocak 2014 tarih ve 28871 sayılı Resmi Gazete'de yayımlanan plan

AFAD (2022a). Türkiye Afet Risk Azaltma Planı (TARAP). 8 Temmuz 2022 tarihli 31890 sayılı Resmî Gazete'de yayımlanan plan.

AFAD (2022b). Türkiye Afet Müdahale Planı (TAMP). 15 Eylül 2022 tarihli 31954 sayılı Resmî Gazete'de yayımlanan plan.

AFAD (2022c). Açıklamalı Yönetim Terimleri Sözlüğü. Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı Yayını, Ankara.

AFAD (2025). Türkiye Afet Sonrası İyileştirme Planı (TASİP). T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı 9889 sayılı Cumhurbaşkanı Kararı.

Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu (BTK) (2022). Afet anında haberleşme sistemleri. Ankara: BTK Yayınları.

Cadwell, P. (2020). Trust, distrust, and translation in a disaster. Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal, 29(2), 157–174.

Coombs, W.T. (2023). Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding. Sixth Edition, Newbury Park, CA.: Sage Publications.

Diedrichs, D.R., Phelps, K., & Isihara, P.A. (2016). Quantifying communication effects in disaster response logistics: A multiple network system dynamics model. Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management, 6(1), 24-45.

EU (2023). Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and its Situational Awareness Sector. EFAS annual seminar 28-29 September 2023, Olimpia Imperiali Presentation, 23.

FEMA (2020). National Incident Management System Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers, December 2020, USA.

Friedman, D.B., Rose, I.D. & Koskan, A. (2011). Pilot assessment of an experiential disaster communication curriculum. Disaster Prevention and Management, 20 (3), 238-250.

Haupt, B. (2021). The Use of Crisis Communication Strategies in Emergency Management. Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, 18(2), 125-150.

IFRC (2016). International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, The IFRC and Community Resilience: Communication Guidance for National Societies, Geneva, 28.

Jayasekara, P. K. (2019). Role of Facebook as a disaster communication media. International Journal of Emergency Services, 8(2), 191–204.

Liu, B. F., I. A. Iles, & E. Herovic. (2020). Leadership under Fire: How Governments Manage Crisis Communication. Communication Studies, 71(1), 128–47.

Malesic, M. (2019). The Concept of Trust in Disasters: The Slovenian Experience. Disaster Prevention and Management, 28(5), 603-615.

Miller, K. (2015). Organizational communication: Approaches and processes. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Öztürk, M., ve Demir, Y. (2023). Bilgilendirme ve Kaos Arasında: Afet Yönetiminde Medyanın Rolüne Yönelik Bibliyometrik Bir Analiz. TRT Akademi, Afet Yönetimi ve Medya, 8(18), 506 – 527.

Rafi, M.M., Aziz, T. & Lodi, S.H. (2018). A comparative study of disaster management information systems. Online Information Review, 42(6), 971-988

Saputro, K.A. (2016). Information Volunteers' Strategies in Crisis Communication: The Case of the Mt. Merapi Eruption in Indonesia, 2010. International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment, 7(1), 63-72.

United Nations (UN) (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 Report. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 37.

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. United Nations. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/ 43291_sendai frameworkfordrren.pdf

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) (2005). Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. World Conference on Disaster Reduction, 18-22 January 2005, Hyogo, Japan.